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HISTORY

OF A

CASE,

OF INCISTED DROPSY;

WITH A

DISSECTION

OF THE SEVERAL

CYSTS:

AS COMMUNICATED TO THE AMERICAN *ACADEMY*

OF *ARTS* AND *SCIENCES*, JAN, 31, 1787.

BY

Dr. Abijah Cheever,

BOSTON.

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DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS.

TO WIT.

(L. S.) BE it remembered, that on the eighteenth Day of Auguſt, in the nineteenth Year of the Independence of the United States of America, ABIJAH CHEEVER, of the ſaid Diſtrict, hath depoſited in this office the Title of a Book, the Right whereof he claims, as Author, in the Words following, to wit, "Hiſtory of a Caſe of inciſted Dropſy; with a Diſſection "of the ſeveral Cyſts; as communicated to the Ame- "rican Academy of Arts and Sciences, January 31, "1787. By Dr. ABIJAH CHEEVER, Boſton." In Conformity to the Act of the Congreſs of the United States, intitled "An Act for the Encouragement of Learning, "by ſecuring the Copies of Maps, Charts and Books, "to the Authors and Proprietors of ſuch Copies, during "the Times therein mentioned."

N. GOODALL, Clerk
of the Diſtrict of Maſſachuſetts.

A true Copy of Record—Atteſt,
N. GOODALL.

I preſented this "HISTORY," &c. to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Jan. 31, 1787. Soon after, one of the faculty of this town requeſted to read a copy thereof, which I lent him for that purpoſe; and, notwithſtanding he had never ſeen the patient or ſubject, this Copy was publiſhed in the ſecond Vol. of the Memoirs of the London Medical Society, fol. 368, Art. 32, and *his Name* annexed thereto as Author; who has alſo been honoured by the *London Medical Society* for this communication. By all of which it appears he has completely arrogated this Hiſtory to himſelf; thereby taking from me, not only my Right, but alſo expoſing me to an eſſential injury, the uncertainty who is the author. I am therefore obliged to obtain the firſt and avoid the latter, to adopt this proceedure effectually to eſtabliſh theſe two objects, after having waited with much patience, in vain, in hopes to have had ſuch juſtice done me as would have made it *unneceſſary* for me to have taken any order upon the ſubject.

A. CHEEVER.

Boſton, Auguſt 19, 1794.

This may certify, That there is now on the Files of the *American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, a Communication by DOCTOR ABIJAH CHEEVER, of Boſton, dated Nov. 25, 1786, read before the Academy Jan. 31, 1787, and entitled, "*Hiſtory of a Caſe of inciſted Dropſy, with a Diſſection of the ſeveral Cyſts.*"

Atteſt, JOHN CLARKE, Recording Secretary.

Boſton, Aug. 17, 1794.

HISTORY
OF A CASE OF INCISTED DROPSY.

A YOUNG woman, thirty-four years of age, applied to me, in June, 1786, to be relieved of hydropic ſwellings of the Abdomen, with which ſhe was firſt affected in the early part of this year. She informed me, ſhe had been very intemperate, and extremely imprudent for ſome years, and had, previous to this indiſpoſition, been cured of the Lues Venerea.

AFTER the trial of powerful diuretics, cathartics, and deobſtruent medicines, without advantage,

vantage, I performed the Paracenteſis, and upwards of four gallons of limpid water were diſcharged. After this operation, I immediately adminiſtered Tonics and occaſional Evacuants. She improved in health, recovered her appetite and digeſtion, and gradually regained her ſtrength and ſpirits; and had a return of regularity in the whole animal œconomy; the urine, in particular, was diſcharged in its uſual quantity and colour.

This healthy appearance was of ſhort duration: In a few weeks the Abdomen again tumefied, the accuſtomed evacuations were ſuppreſſed, or irregular; the diſeaſe increaſed with great rapidity, and the operation of tapping was again had recourſe to, with ſimilar advantages—which laſted much ſhorter than before.

She

She filled again with water, and I tapped her the third time; finding this was the only means of procuring her any relief, I neceſſarily performed the operation the fourth time: Soon after which a fever and diarrhea enſuing, ſhe died the 14th October, 1736.

I was induced, by ſome extraordinary appearances, to open the body.

THE

THE DISSECTION.

On opening the integuments of the Abdomen, I discovered a collection of purulent matter, lodged between the oblique and tranverse muscles; upon continuing the incision into the cavity of the Abdomen, there gushed out an extremely fœtid fluid, intermixed with pus and coagulable lymph, in which numerous hydatides of the magnitude of an hazel-nut, were floating: After evacuating this collection, of which were several gallons, I was surprised to find, that instead of the abdominal Viscera, the whole anterior surface of the Abdomen was occupied by

a membranous Cyſt, which adhered firmly to the internal lamina of the Pœritoneum, extending from the brim of the Pelvis to the Epigaſtric region, which had contained the collection juſt mentioned, and by its weight and magnitude it had preſſed the Inteſtines into the upper region, immediately againſt the Diaphragm. The ſuperior extremity of this Cyſt, with the poſterior lamina of the Omentum, having formed a complete Septum, in a parallel direction with the Diaphragm, made a diſtinct cavity, which contained the Abdominal Viſcera in a ſound ſtate; but the Inteſtin: Colon eſcaping out of this cavity, took a direction in a right line cloſe to the Vertebræ of the back, and under the poſterior ſurface of the great Cyſt, ſimilar to the paſſing of the Oeſophagus through the Thorax; and the inferior extremity of the Cyſt, with the contiguous membranes,

branes, formed another Septum, around the brim of the Pelvis, and made, alſo, a diſtinct cavity below; thus was the cavity of the Abdomen converted into ſeveral diſtinct cavities.

AFTER removing this great Cyſt, the tunic of which was about half an inch in thickneſs, I diſcovered another Cyſt, of about five inches diameter, between the Viſica Urinaria and Uterus, full of purulent matter, and a ſubſtance of a ſteatomatous appearance, combined with a great quantity of hair, eighteen inches in length.

THE Uterus was but little diſeaſed; on removing it, I diſcovered a third Cyſt, lying between this Viſcus and the Inteſtin: Rectum, of half the ſize of the ſecond, containing pus and a fatty ſubſtance, ſimilar to gooſe greaſe, intermixed with hair, alſo; with the additional peculiarity of

having

having its internal surface lined throughout with a lamella of bone, adhering firmly to the tunic of the Cyst.

The hair found in each of the Cysts, was of a light, sandy colour; but the hair of the Mons Veneris, and the head of the Patient, was black. The length of it removes any suggestion of its originating from an Extra-uterine Fœtus; and it appears beyond all doubt to have been generated within the body.

I have been thus particular, as few facts of this nature have yet appeared; and I conceived it might have a tendency to furnish some light upon the subject of the theory of the generation of the hair within the human body.

I remarked this further extraordinary circumstance—

circumſtance—notwithſtanding the bladder was become almoſt in a ſcirrhous ſtate, and in ſome parts oſſified, yet, when the patient was relieved by tapping, ſhe diſcharged urine plentifully, and with as much facility as in health.

I HAVE herewith ſent you the oſſified cyſt, the hair, and other ſubſtance within in; the Veſica Urinaria oſſified, as alſo the ſubſtances found in the ſecond cyſt, for the inſpection and conſideration of the members of the Academy.

Explanation of the annexed Plate.

Figure *A*. the third Cyſt, the hair, and other ſubſtances within it.

c. in figure *A*. ſhews the lamella of bone.

Figure *B*. The ſubſtance in the ſecond Cyſt.

SIR,

THE extraordinary phænomena, exhibited in this patient and ſubject, influenced me to preſent the above Hiſtory of the Caſe to you, as Preſident of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

I have the honor to be,
SIR,
With great reſpect,
Your moſt obedient, humble ſervant,

ABIJAH CHEEVER.

To JAMES BOWDOIN, *Eſq.*
Preſident of the American
Academy of Arts and Sciences.

BOSTON,
Nov. 25, 1786.

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